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ABSTRACT

How public deliberation can be used to bring together schools and communities with linguistic and cultural diversity so that they can focus on educational reform is discussed. Public deliberation is described and its purposes reviewed. Three public engagement formats, forums and study circles, focus groups, and citizens' juries, are described. One in five school children comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken, and shifting demographic patterns are already seen in U.S. urban schools. Public deliberation can bring diverse groups of people together to achieve understanding, if not consensus, on a range of educational issues. Appendixes contain a guide to the three dialogue formats, a guide to five dialogue organizations that provide training and technical assistance, and a list of resources, including articles about communities that have used public deliberation to change their schools. (Contains 22 references.) (SLD)

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Public Deliberation:

A Tool for Connecting School Reform and Diversity

Suzanne Ashby, Cris Garza, and Maggie Rivas

SEDL Language and Diversity Program

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Public Deliberation: A Tool for Connecting School Reform and Diversity

By: Suzanne Ashby, Cris Garza, and Maggie Rivas
SEDL Language and Diversity Program

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 E. 7th St.
Austin, TX 78701

http://www.sedl.org

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Public Dialogue—A Democratic Tradition

From Our Historical Past:

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

Thomas Jefferson
Letter to William Charles Jarvis
(September 28, 1820)

To Our Present Time:

After the discussion, I had a change of heart. And that always amazes me, because you think you know how you feel about things, then you hear someone else's opinion.

Woman from El Paso, Texas

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I. Introduction

Americans are probably more aware today of the changing school population than at any time in the history of our nation's education system. Towns and communities that historically have been composed of one or two racial or ethnic groups find their public schools enrolling children from a variety of language and cultural backgrounds.

During 1988-1991, public school enrollment increased by one million students, with over three-quarters of this growth due to Hispanic and Asian students.

These shifting demographics represent new kinds of challenges for American education, many of which are being addressed within the school reform movement.

School reformers and concerned community members are coming together for genuine and sustained deliberation about their expectations of schools and the strategies that they are willing to support to create and sustain change. Public deliberation offers the reform movement the opportunity to bring communities and schools together. Schools must include the perspectives of linguistically and culturally diverse students and their families. Without com-

Public deliberation offers the reform movement the opportunity to bring communities and schools together.

SEDL's Diversity in Dialogue project examines conditions and factors that support or hinder the public deliberation process as diverse groups come together for genuine and sustained discussion about public education.

mon understanding among all segments of society regarding educational goals and ways of measuring progress, most reform strategies are likely to be short-lived and ineffective, at least with regard to the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Public Deliberation: A Tool for Connecting School Reform and Diversity was developed in conjunction with SEDL's Diversity in Dialogue project, which examines conditions and factors that support or hinder the public deliberation process as diverse groups come together for genuine and sustained discussion about public education. This guide discusses how public deliberation can be used to bring schools and communities with linguistic and cultural diversity together to focus on the topic of school reform. It also provides a description of and purpose for public deliberation and a summary of three public engagement formats, with organizations that offer training and technical assistance. The appendix furnishes a list of resources, including articles featuring communities that have used public deliberation to change their schools.

This paper is not intended to provide an exhaustive discussion of public engagement formats and resources. Instead, it is designed to be an initial source as schools and communities consider integrating public deliberation engagements into school reform plans.

II. Public Deliberation

Well before the American Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, public deliberation was conducted through town meetings and helped set the course for American democracy (Mathews & McAfee, 1997). It has been the foundation of our democratic government. Through public deliberation, people chose their leaders, created their laws, collected their taxes, ran their schools, and cared for and protected each other.

Educational advocacy by parents and communities is part of this country's history. In the early 19th century, African-American parents established the Smith School in Boston when their children were excluded from the public education system. In this century, advocacy groups helped bring new levels of access and responsiveness to minority students through such landmark court cases as *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Lau v. Nichols* (Olsen, et al., 1994).

Communities that use public deliberation work together on problems they feel "require more action by more citizens" (Mathews & McAfee, 1997, p. 7). The current state of public schools is an example of a community concern that many believe fits this description (Boyte, Marshall, Skelton, & Soler, 1997; Coombs & Wycoff, 1994; Mathews, 1996; Tyack, 1997; Wadsworth, 1997; Wagner, 1997; and Wolk, 1996).

A participant in a focus group on public schools voiced this common concern:

> *I see an awful lot of kids graduating from high school, putting in applications at my place of work, and they can't even fill out the forms. But they've graduated. It's very disturbing.*
> (Wadsworth, 1997, p. 44)

Such educational issues and other community concerns are being addressed through public deliberation.

When people who take part in public deliberation are asked why they participate, their responses range from personal growth to a desire to change the political system. Some say it helps them learn to become better listeners and practice problem solving. Others say it helps them understand complex issues and different points of view. Still others say they want to find a better way to govern and connect with officeholders and community

Educational advocacy by parents and communities is part of this country's history.

leaders. But a common thread for all is wanting to improve their communities and their lives (Mathews & McAfee, 1997).

Deliberation is people talking and learning together. "The more we get together and talk, the more we discover that we have a shared future and a shared destiny" (Mathews & McAfee, 1997, p. 6). One significant result of repeated deliberation is that it gives people the confidence to make changes in their communities.

The following are general characteristics of public deliberation:

- Participants learn to understand issues and build knowledge by talking and listening to varied points of view and by reviewing selected information and materials.
- Participants acknowledge that each person brings expertise to the group and has a contribution to make.
- Participants make a commitment to create new knowledge and to use this knowledge to affect policy and to make changes in their communities.
- Participants find a way to reconnect to democratic principles and governance.

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III. The Purpose of Deliberation

Public deliberation can have a variety of purposes:

- Citizens and public bodies bring diverse groups of people together in town meetings for community problem solving at the neighborhood, city, county, state, or national level.
- Classroom teachers use public deliberation to engage their students in politics, to experience being a member of a deliberating citizenry, and to better understand participatory government.
- Organizations and institutions use public deliberation as a catalyst in the community, devising better ways to carry out their mission and become partners in improving the common good.

In our daily lives, we constantly hear people debate right and wrong, weighing their side against the other at PTA meetings, city council sessions, demonstrations, public hearings, and in political campaigns. On the radio and TV we hear combatants bitterly opposed over issues, each concerned about winning and proving the other side wrong. Dialogue is not debate. It is a structured process of face-to-face exchange for making decisions that lead to actions. Deliberation is dialogue based on the premise that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they forge new approaches and solutions. It asks people to put aside their own interests and hear what others feel and think. It is this distinct process of making decisions based on many and varied positions that allows citizens to act together (Mathews & McAfee, 1997).

In "On Dialogue, Culture, and Organizational Learning," Edgar H. Schein discusses whether debate is more or less desirable than dialogue. He argues that debate "is a valid problem-solving and decision-making process only if one can assume that the group members understand each other well enough to be talking the same language" (1993, p. 47). One danger in group discussion is that groups may reach what he calls a "false consensus." People may think they mean the same thing only to find out later that they misunderstood each other. They discover that subtle differ-

Deliberation is dialogue based on the premise that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they forge new approaches and solutions.

Taking time to build trust and finding ways to articulate basic assumptions is key to deliberation.

ences in meaning have major consequences. He suggests dialogue be used as a basic process for building understanding. "By letting disagreement go, meanings become clearer and the group gradually builds a shared set of meanings that make much higher levels of mutual understanding and creative thinking possible" (1993, p. 47).

According to the authors of *The Unfinished Journey: Restructuring Schools in a Diverse Society* (Olsen et al., 1994), many schools found discussing race and the differential treatment of racial and cultural minorities painfully difficult. A lack of common language also made dialogue difficult in these schools. "It's not just finding the words, it's finding out whether we mean the same thing by the words we use. It's how people perceive and define issues" (Olsen et al., 1994, p. 35). The words one person uses to express important beliefs can make others uncomfortable and angry. One individual may call passionately for building a common ground, while another hears that as a desire to diminish the richness of cultural diversity. Taking time to build trust and finding ways to articulate basic assumptions is key to deliberation (Olsen et al., 1994).

IV. The Challenge of Educating Diverse Students

Mark Gerzon describes the challenge of deliberation "As citizens on the eve of the next millennium, in a nation exploding with diversity, our challenge is to listen to fellow citizens who anger us, disturb our thoughts, expose our preconceptions, and even impugn our integrity" (Gerzon, 1996, p. xxii). Public deliberation offers communities the opportunity to change the way they approach problems. It encourages people to be involved and to make acting together a community habit and responsibility.

The education of all children is a community responsibility. Educators, along with community members and organizations, are working together to create schools that will work more effectively in our changing and diverse society. School reform is fundamentally about widening the circle of the traditional, formal school system to include the concerns, expectations, desires, and wisdom of the greater community. Parents, business people, religious and civic groups, retired persons, recent immigrants, policymakers, and average taxpayers must join public schools to help educate our forty million school children.

Today, the school reform movement affects students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and the general community. Educators

Parents, business, religious and civic groups, retired persons, recent immigrants, policymakers, and average taxpayers must participate with public schools to help educate our forty million school children.

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One in five school children comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken.

and policymakers are looking beyond the schools for support in helping all students to achieve high academic standards. Current reform calls for establishing positive school relationships with parents and communities and making them partners in the education process.

School Reform and Diversity

The vision of school reform is to achieve a high-quality education for every child. David Perkins, in his book Smart Schools, aptly describes how difficult it is to meet this challenge in light of current school demographic changes: "We want schools to deliver a great deal of knowledge and understanding to a great many people of greatly differing talents and with a great range of interests and a great variety of cultural and family backgrounds" (1992, p. 2).

The American school system faces two major problems as it considers school reform amidst the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students: (1) the system's growth that includes large numbers of native-born minorities and recent immigrants whose first language is not English, and (2) the system's historical failure to achieve academic success with many minority students.

Our Changing Demographics

The shifting demographic patterns are already seen in the country's urban school districts. Most minority students attend school districts with enrollments of 10,000 students or more. During the period 1988-1991, public school enrollment increased by one million students. Over three-quarters of this growth is due to Hispanic and Asian students. Hispanic student enrollment increased by 645,000 and Asian student enrollment increased by 140,000. Slightly more than 30 percent of students in public schools are members of minority groups. One in five school children comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken. By the year 2035, white non-Hispanic students will no longer be the majority of the nation's school-age population (NCES, 1997).

Hispanic and Asian students bring with them much diversity. Ten years ago Hispanic immigrants came from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba. Mexico still dominates this group, but significant numbers also come from Columbia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and the Dominican and Central American republics (Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1992). Asian immigrants also come from many different locations, such as Vietnam, Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Many of these immigrant students enter the educational system, from preschool to high school, speaking no English. Some immigrants are illiterate in their native language, while others have had excellent schooling (McLeod, 1995).

Many minority students in schools underachieve academically. They take fewer academic courses and lag behind in reading and writ-

U.S. Dropouts by Race-Ethnicity, 1996

	White Non-Hispanic	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Number of youth, ages 16-24	21.9 million	4.6 million	4.4 million
Number of youth dropouts, ages 16-24	1.6 million	0.6 million	1.3 million
Percent of youth, ages 16 to 24, who were dropouts in 1996	7.3%	13.0%	29.4%

Source: NCES, 1996.

ing skills. Many explanations for the school failure of minority students are shaped by the assumptions that the student's sociocultural background is deficient and impedes academic success. Most minority students are economically disadvantaged. Some students are fourth, fifth and sixth generation native-born ethnic minorities who may or may not be limited English proficient. Others are limited English proficient whose families rarely speak English at home. Because the lack of English language skills is often equated with the lack of academic potential, recently arrived minority students are typically placed in the lowest-level classes with the least demanding curriculum, almost guaranteeing low achievement levels. Because of IQ tests that did not consider language and cultural differences, Hispanics have been mistakenly placed in special education, where they are overrepresented. Fortunately, many schools today are abandoning instructional practices based on these assumptions. There is growing recognition today that a variety of factors play a role and influence the outcomes of minority students (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Schools are trying to retain the hundreds of thousands of culturally and linguistically diverse young adults that leave the educational system each year without successfully completing high school. According to *Dropout Rates in the United States*, (NCES, 1996), 3.6 million young adults ages 16 through 24 were not enrolled in high school and had not completed high school. This accounts for 11.1 percent of the 32.5 million population of 16-through-24-year-olds in the U.S. in 1996. The table shown here presents the 3.6 million dropouts of the three largest race-ethnicity groups.

Do students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds need special policies? Probably not, but schools need to address both the strengths and needs of these students. The challenge of educating children from these different backgrounds is complex. Motivation, social organization, and ways of thinking and speaking that vary with education, income, and class status impact school experiences and participation. Schools are striving to better understand the cultural characteristics and the socioeconomic variables that affect these students' learning. Educators

Today's students are expected to become critical thinkers, to possess a high level of technological skills, to apply their knowledge to daily problem solving, to be able to work in cooperative or team situations, and to become lifelong learners. Meeting these expectations when so many linguistically and culturally diverse students do not gain a solid grounding in reading, writing, mathematics, or science is a major challenge of school reform.

The success of the reform movement will be measured by how accurately schools determine and respond to the needs of all students, including the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

are developing new ways of teaching diverse students and connecting with their families. In fact, the success of the reform movement will be measured by how accurately schools determine and respond to the needs of all students, including the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Today's students are expected to become critical thinkers, to possess a high level of technological skill, to apply their knowledge to daily problem solving, to be able to work in cooperative or team situations, and to become lifelong learners. Helping them meet these expectations when so many linguistically and culturally diverse students do not gain a solid grounding in reading, writing, mathematics, and science is a major challenge for school reform. Clearly little progress will be made unless schools and communities face the challenge of a broadened dialogue about the kinds of systems needed to produce those outcomes. Meeting these expectations requires a better understanding of how culture, race, language, and national background affect the lives and needs of linguistically diverse students (Olsen, et al., 1994). Educators and the community must work as partners and begin a dialogue that creates plans and practices that are inclusive and provide all students with an equal educational opportunity.

The magnitude of the current demographic changes in schools, coupled with the notion that the process of education involves every segment of society, requires educators, parents, and the greater community to come together in new roles and partnerships.

V. Public Deliberation and School Reform

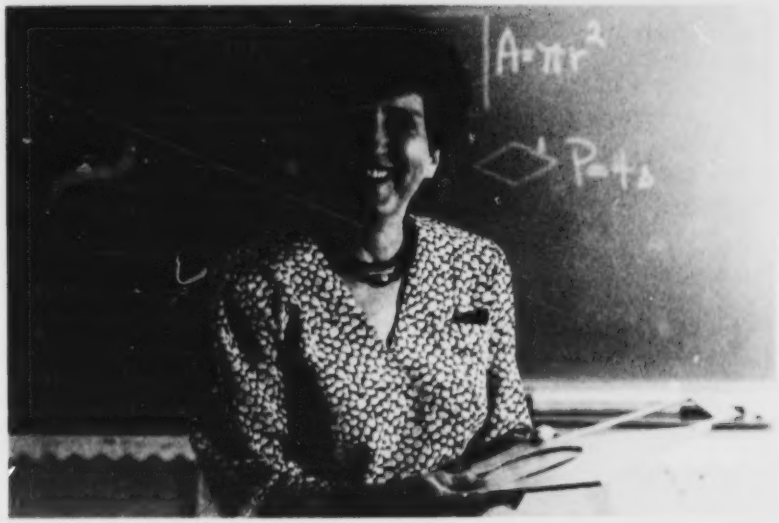
According to the Education Commission of the States (1997), reforms are better supported, better understood, and more effective when communities play an important role in their creation. Schools need to build community involvement and understanding into the reform process early and not as an afterthought. When education leaders communicate with the public throughout the reform process, they become aware of the public's concerns. This awareness enables them to examine and adjust ideas and policies in light of community concerns. The result will usually be greater community trust of those reforms.

Public deliberation serves to bring diverse groups of people together to achieve understanding of — if not consensus on—on a range of public issues, from the use of illegal drugs to the role of public education. Participants describe these structured conversations as promoting local dialogue that is personal, civil, deliberative, inclusive, and relevant. Insights into the potential role of public deliberation about education reform hold promise for helping state and local educators and policymakers make progress toward gaining public input, approval, and support responses necessary to realize the promise of high-quality education for all students (SEDL, 1995).

However, if public deliberation is to be a tool for effective schooling for all children, an effort must be made to ensure that all segments of the community are engaged in the dialogue. All too frequently, linguistically, culturally, and racially diverse populations are excluded from or decline to participate in public discourse. Their noninclusion or reluctance may come from a perceived lack of skills needed to participate, requirements for culturally unfamiliar behavior, or because the topic and activity appear irrelevant (SEDL, 1995). Deliberation requires not only setting aside time for people to meet and talk, but nurturing a sense of safety and connection for all involved (Olsen et al., 1994).

Family and community voices are essential to the dialogue of school reform. They provide a window on the experiences of students that teachers and other educators do not have. For students of lin-

Public deliberation serves to bring diverse groups of people together to achieve understanding— if not consensus—on a range of public issues.



Family and community voices are essential to the dialogue of school reform. They provide a window on the experiences of students that teachers and other educators do not have.

guistically and culturally diverse families, the window helps to link school and home by fostering better understanding of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Without this input, schools are at a disadvantage in identifying and implementing needed reforms, and children are at risk of being misunderstood, miseducated, and excluded (Olsen et al., 1994).

Common ground between the public and its schools emerges when communities share purposes, courtesy, language, issues, and processes and pledge to work together. In many communities, parents, educators, and community members at large have reached an understanding that the public's role must go beyond paying taxes, electing school boards, and participating in special events. Educators alone, though they are the professionals, cannot decide how schools will be run. The public must fulfill its role and help create the schools it wants.

Public deliberation can be an important tool that helps a community "generate greater clarity and broad agreement" (Wagner, 1997). The unique characteristics of public deliberation—adaptability, inclusiveness, accessibility, and emphasis on shared problem solving—make it an important tool as schools change the way they teach and prepare students. Once integrated into a community culture, deliberation looks like a revolving-door process (Ledell, 1996). "If we think of education as part of our work as citizens, it changes our relationship to schools, making it more likely that we will see them as our agents, as institutions that help carry out public responsibilities" (Mathews, 1996, p. 54).

VI. Ways to Come Together

Public deliberation initiatives are sponsored by a diverse network of civic and educational organizations, such as neighborhood associations, Junior Leagues, senior-citizen centers, public schools, libraries, churches, or coalitions of organizations. Sometimes these groups are small and informal and meet in someone's living room. Other times they are large and formal, involving thousands of people. What is common about these varied groups, however, is their decision to take responsibility for common problems.

There are three types of formats that groups use for public deliberation:

- the forum or study circle,
- the focus group, and
- the Citizens Jury®.

Each of these is described in more detail below.

Forums and Study Circles

The purpose of both a forum and a study circle is to engage participants in making–or at least working toward–a decision about how they will act on a problem or policy they think is important to their community or country. Both are characterized by people coming together to deliberate to reach common ground or a shared sense of purpose. A forum and a study circle may differ in the size of the group and the number of times the group meets, but essentially, they are the same.

- A forum tends to gather a large group (30-200 people) that meets once to discuss a single issue.
- A study circle typically gathers a small group (5 to 20 people) that meets weekly for a series of 3 to 4 sessions to discuss the same issue.

Dialogue sessions for both the forum and the study circle last about two hours and are led by a moderator whose role is to focus the discussion, engage participants, and enforce mutually agreed upon ground rules. Moderators clarify by asking questions and help the group consider a variety of views. Training that includes an introduction to forum practices and processes is offered through the National Issues Forums Public Policy Institutes and the Public Agenda Foundation. Sessions vary from one day to two and a half days. The Study Circles Resource Center offers a basic six-hour training format for moderators. Training, to conduct either a forum or study circle, can benefit moderators; however, it is not required. Resource guides and train-

The purpose of both a forum and a study circle is to engage participants in making–or at least working toward–a decision about how they will act on a problem or policy they feel is important to their community or country.

ing manuals provide moderators with the necessary information to plan, conduct, and evaluate deliberation meetings and execute action plans and follow-up activities.

Depending on the goals of the forum or study circle, both formats can support participants through various phases of deliberation: from talking, listening, and learning how others feel about a topic, to developing action plans, making recommendations, creating task force committees, or influencing policy outcomes. New or related forums or study circles may grow out of these discussions.

A forum or a study circle may have the intended outcome of determining a course of action. This action-taking role is exemplified by the townsfolk in traditional Western movies when they gather, overcome their fear, and hire a sheriff to drive out the outlaws (Mathews, 1996). A more modern example is a community deliberating about the issue of quality education and deciding to form a community education foundation to fund special requests from teachers to enrich the curriculum.

Other times, a forum or study circle is meant to inform a governing body, such as a school board or a city council that is responsible for designing and implementing a course of action. In this latter role, participants deliberate so that those responsible for taking action do so based on informed and reflective recommendations. In an example of how group forums can help a school district practice site-based management, one high school was given the challenge of making a transition from a vocational training curriculum to one of science and technology. Through many forums involving students, parents, staff, and community members, the school learned the community's concerns and expectations. These were reflected in the faculty's plan for reinventing the school. In return, the community embraced the school with more support and allegiance.

A study circle, unlike a forum, will meet several times. However,

Forums and Study Circles

Preparations and follow-up steps

Preparation steps include:

- Building a coalition
- Identifying the issue
- Designating moderators
- Reviewing or adapting materials
- Training moderators
- Recruiting participants
- Locating meeting site
- Handling logistics

Follow-up steps include:

- Individual, group, and next-step reflections

Organizations that provide technical assistance

Study Circles Resource Center
P.O. Box 203
697 Promfret St.
Promfret, CT 06258
Contact: Matt Leighninger
Phone: 860/928-2616
Fax: 860/928-3713
scrc@neca.com

Public Agenda Foundation
6 East 39th St.
New York, NY 10016
Contact: Will Friedman
willfr@ix.netcom.com
Phone: 212/686-6610
Fax: 212/889-3461
http://www.publicagenda.org

National Issues Forums Institute
100 Commons Rd.
Dayton, OH 45459-2777
Phone: 800/433-7834
http://www.nifi.org

there are many variations on the basic study circle structure of weekly small group meetings conducted over the course of 3 to 4 weeks. Some groups integrate a study circle into a regularly scheduled meeting. Other groups, who cannot meet regularly, conduct a retreat or workshop where the entire study circle takes place in one or two days (Study Circles Resource Center, 1993, p. 4).

Both forums and study circles can be used at the local, city, state, and national levels. The discussions typically begin with personal involvement centered around the participant's own experiences, interests, and views on the topic. The issue is then considered from multiple points of view. Issues are divided into manageable sections, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth (Study Circles Resource Center, 1993, p. 3). The issues discussed vary widely: race relations, crime, drugs, education, and other community problems or controversies.

To help participants analyze these different perspectives, many forums and study circles provide participant manuals, videos, and other materials. These resources can be obtained from organizations such as the National Issues Forums Institute and the Study Circles Resource Center and may be adapted to local needs. Many communities and organizations also develop and create their own materials.

Focus Groups

The purpose of focus groups is to understand how diverse groups in a community think about an issue. Different types of groups, made up of representative members, provide distinct points of view. A focus group is a structured conversation organized around a set of questions and typically lasting about two hours. It is designed to gauge how a group of 10 to 15 participants feels about a specific topic. The questions are carefully chosen to elicit from various groups (parents, students, educators, community members, or employers) their thinking, concerns, and wishes.

Typically, a single organization such as a school board or neighborhood association will be the initiating organization. Often they coordinate with other groups to engage

Focus Groups

Preparations and follow-up steps

Preparation steps include:

- Identifying discussion questions
- Determining the number and type of participants
- Designating one or a series of focus groups
- Determining separate or mixed focus groups
- Recruiting participants
- Designating moderator(s)
- Locating meeting site
- Handling logistics

Follow-up steps include:

- Reporting back to the community through a series of town meetings
- Commissioning body acting on recommendations

Organizations that provide technical assistance

Public Agenda Foundation
6 East 39th St.
New York, NY 10016
Contact: Will Friedman
willfr@ix.netcom.com
Phone: 212/686-6610
Fax: 212/889-3461
http://www.publicagenda.org

Institute for Responsive Education
Northeastern University
50 Nightingale Hall
Boston, MA 02115
Phone: 617/373-2595
Fax: 617-373/8924
http://www.resp-ed.org
Contact: Tony Wagner
Phone: 617/373-4479

The purpose of focus groups is to understand how diverse groups in a community think about an issue.

a diverse pool of citizens that will help build a clear and accurate picture of the community's understanding and desired direction. Tony Wagner (1995) provides basic information in "How to Conduct a Focus Group." A group of teachers will have different needs and concerns from a group of parents. Therefore, he suggests that a separate focus group for each group will provide an opportunity to understand their distinct viewpoints and concerns. Other times, he explains, it is helpful to mix the groups, to include varied perspectives. However, if the intent of the dialogue is to learn how one group views the other, it is better to keep the groups separate.

The focus group approach may involve gathering snapshot views from one focus per constituency. The information from these discussions can help to design questions for a survey or town meeting. If the goal is also to partly educate the larger community on a complex topic, then a series of many separate focus groups over an extended period can help to inform the community. A series of focus groups can also pave the way for a larger town meeting involving many participants.

A focus group series can also impart knowledge and understanding and help participants reach conclusions based on reflective dialogue. In this case, an extended series of dialogues has educational value. For example, one school district used focus groups to bring understanding and clarification about the complex issue of school reform. The dialogue provided participants with the needed time, information, and variety of perspectives on which they based their decisions.

Typically, four or five carefully designed questions frame the issue and help clarify people's thinking. When needing to compare focus groups, it is best to ask the same questions in the same sequence. An impartial moderator, whose role it is to elicit participation from all members, establish and enforce mutually agreed upon ground rules, and move the discussion forward with clarifying questions, should guide the discussion. The Institute for Responsive Education and the Public Agenda Foundation offer several one-half to two-day training sessions. Focus group moderators benefit from training; however, it is not required.

Citizens Juries

A jury that deliberates for public policy is called a Citizens Jury®.* The purpose of the jury is to bring together a group of citizens who are representative of the community to examine a complex issue and pronounce a judgment. The members of the jury are briefed in detail on all the background and current thinking about a specific issue and asked to deliberate and make recommendations to the larger community. A jury has 12 to 24 jurors who have been selected so

**It should be noted that the Jefferson Center for New Democratic Processes has registered the Citizens Jury process. For ease in reading, from this point forward, we will not include the ® symbol each time we mention "Citizens Jury."*

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as to constitute a microcosm of the community. Hearings are led by a moderator, last four to five days, and deliver briefings by expert witnesses. The witnesses are the sole source of information. A jury can remain together or form into smaller groups. Whether as a larger body or in smaller groups, they study the information, cross-examine the witnesses and discuss the various aspects of the issue. Time, resources, and information help the jury arrive with a reasonable, well developed, and thoughtful solution. The jury's conclusions are presented to the body that commissioned them in the first place. The jury's verdict need not be unanimous nor its recommendations binding. However, the commissioning body must inform the general public of the jury's findings and undertake to carry out the recommendations or give reasons why it chose not to do so.

The purpose of the jury is to bring together a group of citizens who are representative of the community to examine a complex issue and pronounce a judgement.

Juries can be conducted at the national, state, city, and local level, or on a smaller scale by individual organizations. The idea of a Citizens Jury was created by Ned Crosby of the Jefferson Center in 1971. It is used in the United States as well as in Germany and Britain.

Here is an example of how one school district used the jury process to identify and address its needs. A random telephone survey was conducted to identify 24 jurors representative of the district regarding age, education, gender, geographic location, and general attitude. For five consecutive days the jury heard testimony from witnesses, deliberated amongst themselves, and developed a set of recommendations. A final report was presented in a community public forum.

Like forums, study circles, and focus groups, the Citizens Jury process helps participants take a wider, more objective perspective and see issues from multiple viewpoints. The deliberation begins with the facts, then moves beyond the accumulation of knowledge and information to a place where no expert or book can advise, but to a place that David Mathews calls "public knowledge." This knowledge is the product of serious reflection and is possible only through group engagement (Mathews, 1996).

Citizens Jury

Preparations and follow-up steps

Preparation steps include:

- Identifying the issue
- Recruiting expert witnesses
- Establishing an advisory committee
- Conducting a survey to select jurors
- Recruiting the jury
- Locating meeting site
- Handling logistics

Follow-up steps include:

- Informing the community of its findings and recommendations
- Commissioning body follows up on recommendations

Organizations that provide technical assistance

The Jefferson Center for New Democratic Processes
3100 West Lake St., Suite 405
Minneapolis, MN 55416
Phone: 612/926-3292
Fax: 612/926-3199
jcenter@usinternet.com
Contact: Doug Nethercut

The Citizens Jury process helps participants take a wider, more objective perspective and see issues from multiple viewpoints.

Costs and Facilities

Depending on size, duration, and implementation, the costs of the study circle/forum, focus group, or jury can range from minimal (through the use of volunteers and grassroots methods) to more costly (with a citywide or statewide structure that is planned by and conducted by a community group or coalition and a professional dialogue organization). Communities may also use a combination of the three formats.

Schools, colleges and universities, libraries, community centers, and places of worship are excellent meeting sites. They can provide the needed rooms for both large and small group gatherings, audiovisual equipment, and parking facilities.

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Appendix A: A Guide to Three Dialogue Formats

The following appendix is a chart describing three dialogue formats: forum/study circle, focus group, and Citizens Jury. The chart provides background, planning and preparation information, and identifies technical support organizations. This chart is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather to provide a sampling of dialogue formats that are frequently used and organizations that have extensive experience providing training and technical support.

How to Use the Chart

The first column identifies the type of dialogue format and is followed by headings that will help give an overview of important descriptors, such as the time involved in conducting a session and typical steps needed for preparation and follow-up activities. Also listed is contact information for dialogue organizations.

The chart is designed to help determine what type of format is most suitable for local needs. For example, a community that wants to provide equity and access for all students by developing quality performance standards and multiple authentic measures of performance and connecting these to curriculum might begin by getting a sense of what are the views and concerns of the separate groups (parents, teachers, students, members of the business community). Allowing members of each group to consider the important issues from their perspective, before bringing the groups together in a larger community dialogue, may give each group the feeling that it was heard and help to provide a better understanding of how others see things. In this situation, the focus group format would be a good option.

A second example is provided by a school board that asked the community to help form extended community-based learning experiences across all academic areas, linking groups of students with like-minded facilitators from the larger community. Educators used both study circles and a community forum to identify community strength and expertise and to develop action plans that integrated student learning with community resources.

Each of the three different dialogue formats is a conversation that requires space, time, speaking, listening, reflection, investigation, and a willingness to share and be actively engaged in dialogue. The key to finding the best fit between a dialogue format and a community is to thoughtfully consider community members, school personnel, and dialogue organization staff.

Data for this chart was collected from a combination of sources: World Wide Web sites, handbooks, marketing pamphlets and articles, and conversations with staff members.

Three Dialogue Formats

DIALOGUE FORMAT	PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	GROUP SIZE	TIME	MODERATOR	TRAINING
Forum/Study Circle	The purpose of both a forum and a study circle is to engage participants in making, or at least working toward, a decision about how they will act on a problem or policy they feel is important to their community or country.	A forum is a gathering of a large group of people coming together to discuss the same issue. A study circle is a gathering of a small group of people coming together to discuss the same issue.	A forum can include 30-200 people. A study circle can include 5 to 20 people.	Forums meet once in a two-hour discussion. Study circles meet usually weekly in two-hour discussions for a series of three to four sessions.	Forum and study circle moderators focus the discussion by asking questions and helping the group consider a variety of views.	Forum and study circle moderators benefit from training; however, it is not required. Typically, training ranges from 6 hours to 2-1/2 days.
Focus Group	The purpose of a focus group is to understand how diverse groups in a community think about complex issues. Different types of groups, made up of representative members, provide distinct points of view. Focus group information can also help design a larger town meeting.	Focus groups are a series of one-time structured discussions centered around a specific set of questions.	A focus group usually includes 10-15 people.	A focus group typically lasts about two hours.	Focus group moderators lead the discussion by asking each group the same questions in the same sequence.	Focus group moderators benefit from training; however, it is not required. Typically, training ranges from 4 hours to 2 days.
Citizens Jury	The purpose of the jury is to bring together a group of citizens who are representative of the community to examine a complex issue and pronounce a judgment. Time and resources help the jury arrive at a reasonable, well-developed, and thoughtful solution.	A jury is a group of citizens who come together to learn about an issue, question experts, and make recommendations.	A jury consists of 12 to 24 members.	The jury process lasts four to five days.	Jury moderators lead the hearings.	Jury moderators are associated with the Jefferson Center. However, possibilities for training are available.

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Three Dialogue Formats, continued

DIALOGUE FORMAT	MATERIALS	FACILITIES	PREPARATION	FOLLOW-UP	ORGANIZATIONS
Forum/Study Circle	Typically, participant materials can include manuals, resource materials, and discussion videos. Facilitator materials can include training manuals and resource materials.	Sessions can be conducted at public meeting spaces, such as schools, universities, libraries, community centers, and places of worship.	The typical steps for a study circle/forum include: building a coalition; identifying the issue; designating facilitator(s); reviewing or adapting materals; training moderators; recruiting participants; locating meeting site; handling logistics.	The typical conclusion for a study circle or forum includes individual, group, and next-step reflections.	**National Issues Forums** 100 Commons Rd.• Dayton, OH 45459-2777 Phone: 800/433-7834• http://www.nifi.org **Public Agenda Foundation** 6 E. 39th St.• New York, NY 10016 Contact: Will Friedman willfr@ix.netcom.com Phone: 212/686-6610• Fax: 212/889-3461 http://www.publicagenda.org **Study Circles Resource Center** P.O. Box 203• 697 Promfret St. Promfret, CT 06258 Contact: Matt Leighninger Phone: 860/928-2616• Fax: 860/928-3713 scrc@neca.com
Focus Group	No written materials are required.	Sessions can be conducted at public meeting spaces, such as schools, colleges and universities, libraries, community centers, and places of worship.	The typical preparation steps include: determine discussion questions; determine number and type of participants; deciding on separate or mixed focus groups (parents, teachers, students, community members, etc.); deciding on one or a series of focus groups; recruiting participants; designating moderator(s); locating meeting site; handling logistics.	The typical concluding steps are: report back to community (through a series of town meetings) and the commissioning body acting on recommendations.	**Public Agenda Foundation** 6 E. 39th St.• New York, NY 10016 Contact: Will Friedman willfr@ix.netcom.com Phone: 212/686-6610• Fax: 212/889-3461 http://www.publicagenda.org **Institute for Responsive Education** Northeastern University• Nightingale Hall Boston, MA 02115 Phone: 617/373-2595• Fax: 617/373-8924 http://www.resp-ed.org Contact: Tony Wagner• Phone: 617-373-4479
Citizens Jury	No written materials are required.	Sessions can be conducted at public meeting spaces, such as schools, colleges and universities, libraries, community centers, and places of worship.	Typical steps for a jury include: identifying the issue; recruiting expert witnesses on the issue; establishing an advisory committee; conducting a survey to select jurors; recruiting the jury; locating meeting site; handling the logistics.	The typical concluding steps are: informing the community of its findings and recommendations; commissioning body following up on recommendations	**Jefferson Center for New Democratic Processes** 3100 West Lake St., Suite 405 Minneapolis, MN 55416 Phone: 612/926-3292• Fax 612/926-3199 jcenter@usinternet.com http://www.usinternet.com/users/jcenter Contact: Doug Nethercut

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Appendix B: A Guide to Five Dialogue Organizations

The following appendix describes five dialogue organizations: National Issues Forums Institute, Study Circles Resource Center, Public Agenda Foundation, Institute for Responsive Education, and Jefferson Center for New Democratic Processes. A chart and a one-page summary provide background information on each organization. This is followed by a listing of additional technical and support organizations.

How to Use the Charts and the Summaries

The first column identifies the organization and the contact person. Headings give an overview of the organization, such as a description of its mission or goals, the capacity building offered to communities, the types of groups it works with and resources available, and linkages to other projects or organizations.

The one-page summary provides more detailed information on the organization's approaches and technical support.

List of Resources

This list includes additional organizations that provide information, publications and other resources that promote collaboration, deliberation, problem solving, consensus building, and the democratic process. Although this resource list is limited, it provides an excellent starting place for communities interested in public dialogue.

Finally, the appendix concludes with a reading list detailing how communities use public deliberation to change schools, build partnerships, and broaden the dialogue about who students are, what they need, and the kinds of systems required to meet those needs.

National Issues Forums Institute

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CAPACITY BUILDING	RESOURCES & AUDIENCES	LINKAGES
National Issues Forums (NIF) 100 Commons Rd. Dayton, OH 45459-2777 Phone: 800/433-7834 http://www.nifi.org	National Issues Forums is a project of the National Issues Forums Institute, a program of The Kettering Foundation. NIF is a voluntary, nonpartisan, nationwide network of forums and study circles where citizens come together to discuss timely public issues, based on the tradition of American town meetings. These discussions derive from the notion that citizens need to deliberate about common problems in order to act.	Because of NIF forums, participants are better prepared to think about public issues, make choices, and see issues from different points of view. They are helped to move from making individual choices to making choices as a group, resulting in shared public judgment. Research has shown that citizens who participate in forums are more likely to get involved in ways that help their communities. Moderators and conveners are able to organize programs in their communities through training from NIF's 20 Public Policy Institutes (PPI).	Forums are organized by civic, religious, and business organizations, libraries, schools and universities, and government agencies. NIF provides training, materials and forum sponsorship. Information on how to get started, connect with communities in the network, and obtain the latest publications is available online.	NIF network has more than 6,000 civic and educational organizations. For the past 15 years, Public Agenda, in collaboration with The Kettering Foundation, has developed three discussion guides annually for NIF.

NIF Summary

The National Issues Forums (NIF) is a nonpartisan nationwide network of forums and study circles that has brought citizens together since 1982 to deliberate and make difficult decisions about current issues. These forums have been held in nearly 200 communities in 37 states. Some forums are one-time public meetings for a large group of several hundred people, whereas others are a series of meetings for small groups that come together regularly for a period of weeks. Outcomes from forums provide the basis for a public-affairs program called "A Public Voice," which is broadcast to more than 200 stations each year, including once each summer to a Washington press conference for the public.

Each year three major issues of national concern are identified by NIF conveners across the country, resulting in a clearly written, nonpartisan issue book and video for each of the issues. These are available in college, regular, and abridged editions. Recent issues have included affirmative action, freedom of speech, America's role in the world, family values, youth violence, abortion, health care, and racial inequality.

When involved in a forum, participants receive reading materials such as an issue book, or a shortened version of the issue book that may be printed in the local newspaper, or brief "kitchen forum" booklets for informal discussions. These materials present an overview of the subject and discuss the issue from three or four different perspectives. Citizens are encouraged to weigh the pros, cons, trade-offs, and consequences of all choices. After citizens share their personal views about the subject, they move to establishing common ground for making choices and taking action as a group.

NIF Publications

To help create a forum in a community, NIF offers four publications. One is a brochure on public policy updated yearly which provides a list of Public Policy Institutes (PPI) scheduled during the year. The other three publications are listed below.

- *Talk Doesn't Have to Be Cheap*
- *NIF: A Valuable Part of Program: A Necessary Part of Politics*
- *Organizing Your First NIF/ Study Circle*

The public policy institutes provide conveners and moderators, whether they are NIF newcomers or veterans, with background on the program and with skills for sponsoring, organizing, and moderating forums.

An example of how issues are presented appears in *The Boundaries of Free Speech: How Free Is Too Free?* In this issue book, NIF describes the range of policy options for the issue in the following way:

- **Choice 1: The Case for Legal Sanctions.** Words and images that are obscene, hatemongering, or an inducement to violence pose a real danger. Strict limits, backed up with the force of law, are warranted when speech poses a threat to our physical and moral well-being.
- **Choice 2: The Case for Self-Imposed Restrictions.** While government censorship is ill-advised, sensible limits should be enforced by private institutions. Publishers, radio and television stations, college campuses, and other institutions should restrict offensive speech when it violates community standards.
- **Choice 3: The Case for More Speech, Not Enforced Silence.** Because speaking freely is the cornerstone of our liberties, freedom of expression should be abridged rarely, if at all. The best remedy for offensive messages is not restrictions but more speech.

Source: National Issues Forums, 1998

Study Circles Resource Center

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CAPACITY BUILDING	RESOURCES & AUDIENCES	LINKAGES
Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) P.O. Box 203 697 Promfret St. Promfret, CT 06258 860/928-2616 Fax: 860/928-3713 Email: scrc@neca.com Contact: Matt Leighninger	SCRC is supported by the Topfield Foundation. It is a collaborative program which provides an opportunity for people to build a strong coalition of community representatives to tackle social or political issues. The group is composed of 10-15 people who meet over a period of time to address a critical public issue. A key component of SCRC is the opportunity for participants to take action which leads to change.	SCRC helps build a working group of community leaders who will lead the study circles. Members acquire skills in organizing, dialoguing, planning, problem solving, and finding common ground. Through participation, members learn the power of citizen involvement.	Free assistance is available for communities and organizations that are implementing study circles for large-scale programs. In addition, SCRC assists with occasional on-site training and provides free consultation via telephone, fax, and mail. SCRC also provides support for communitywide programs with discussion materials free of charge whenever possible.	SCRC is linked throughout the country with many communities and collaborates with a number of national organizations, including the National Crime Prevention Council, the YWCA of the USA, the League of Women voters, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of Human Rights Workers, the National Council of Churches, and the Alliance for National Renewal. It also works closely with the National Issues Forum, the Northeast Network, and the Institute for Public Service.

Study Circles Resource Center Summary

Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) began to promote small-group discussion programs in January 1990. The Topfield Foundation, with its history of grassroots participation in social and political issues, supports SCRC. SCRC works to bring communities together to resolve public problems through a process of small, democratic, and highly participatory discussions.

Study circles are small groups of people who meet regularly over a period of time to engage in resolving some social or political issue in the community. The accessibility of reading material provides a starting point for the group discussion. Members are encouraged to share their views, and ideas. By listening to each other, they learn together to respect and value the opinions and experiences of the group's membership. The study circles process differs from typical meetings in that the groups do not begin with set outcomes in mind.

Study circles are characterized by the following:

- The study circle involves 10-15 people who meet regularly over a period of time to address an issue in a democratic and collegial way.
- The study circle is facilitated by a person who helps the group keep the discussion focused, leads the group to consider different views, and asks the difficult questions.
- The study circle considers many points of view and encourages deliberation to find common ground.
- The study circle starts with a session on a personal experience (me and the issue) and progresses to sessions offering a broader perspective (others' perceptions of the issue), to a session that involves action (what action needs to be taken).

SCRC Resources

For some time, study circles have occurred within single organizations. However, SCRC staff have found that large-scale, broad-based discussion programs involving dozens of study circles have the greatest reach and impact. Therefore, Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide was developed. The guide is divided into five parts. Part 1 gives an introduction to the questions: What are study circles? What are community-wide study circle program? What do communities gain from communitywide study circles? And how does SCRC support communitywide discussion programs? Part 2 describes how to build a coalition to sponsor and organize the discussions. Part 3 offers sample materials, such as community survey, letters of invitation, press release for kickoff event, participant evaluation form, and other information. Part 4 documents stories of successful communitywide study circle programs. Part 5 contains the appendices which include an annotated bibliography, a handout comparing dialogue and debate, and an order form for information on resources for communitywide discussion programs.

SCRC offers a variety of services including assistance in creating a communitywide study circle program, advice on the development of materials, and provision of letters of support for funding. In addition, SCRC provides an array of discussion materials on issues concerning education, crime, violence, and race relations. The following guides are available in Spanish: *La violencia en nuestras comunidades* and *El racismo y las relaciones interraciales*. Some samples of "How-To Guides" include: *A Manual for Study Circle Discussion Leaders, Organizers, and Participants; A Guide for Training Study Circle Leaders*; and *Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Material.*

Source: Study Circles Resource Center, 1998

Public Agenda Foundation

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CAPACITY BUILDING	RESOURCES & AUDIENCES	LINKAGES
Public Agenda Foundation 6 East 39th St. New York, NY 10016 Phone: 212/686-6610 Fax: 212/889-3461 Email: willfr@ix.netcom.com http://www.publicagenda.org Contact: Will Friedman	Public Agenda Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public opinion research and citizen education organization. Its mission is to: (1) help leaders better understand the public's point of view on major policy issues, and (2) help citizens better understand critical policy issues so they can make their own more informed and thoughtful decisions.	The Engagement Programs help educators and community leaders foster more informed, involved, and supportive school communities. Through workshops, dialogue leaders learn: • public attitudes, perceptions, and priorities; • what helps/hinders public debate; • what tools and strategies help engagement; • how to plan for effective engagement; and • how to use public opinion research. Through the town meeting framework, a school, school district, community, or state can conduct meetings as the need arises. Support services include: • organizing a demonstration of town meetings; • training local moderators; • oversight and supervision; • package materials (guides, discussion video, and surveys); • summary memo (observations and recommendations).	Public Agenda supports policymakers, educators, local and state community leaders, state organizations, journalists, industry and the general public through public opinion reports and online data. It supports school districts, community leaders, state officials, and state and community organizations through its engagement programs in education. It offers training, materials, and technical services. It produces the discussion guides for Kettering's National Issues Forums Institute.	For the past 15 years, Public Agenda has prepared three discussion guides annually for National Issues Forums Institute, a program of The Kettering Foundation. In collaboration with the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), Public Agenda offers the town meeting framework.

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The Public Agenda Foundation Summary

The Public Agenda Foundation was founded in 1976 by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and by social scientist and author Daniel Yankelovich. Today both are still involved with the organization: Mr. Vance, as chairman, and Mr. Yankelovich, as president. It was their hope that Public Agenda would function as a go-between, helping America's leaders to better understand its citizens while simultaneously creating a better model for broad public participation in democratic decision-making.

Public Agenda Resources

Through in-depth analyses and opinion studies, Public Agenda gives public officials and leaders a unique opportunity to discover what Americans are really thinking. This critical research enables government, industry, and organizations to address constituents' concerns thoughtfully and effectively. Public opinion reports include such titles as:

- *Given the Circumstances: Teachers Talk about Public Education Today;*
- *Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform;*
- *First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools;* and
- *Getting By: What American Teenagers Really Think about Their Schools.*

Drawing on its research, Public Agenda also prepares a broad array of educational materials and reports that help explain policy issues to the public in a balanced and easy-to-understand way. Each year for the past 15 years, the foundation has prepared three discussion guides for the National Issues Forums Institute. Three different perspectives, including their associated costs, trade-offs, and implications, are discussed. Citizens can use this information to weigh various choices and make educated decisions.

Public Agenda Online, a new internet resource, offers in-depth opinion findings and background materials on more than 15 major public policy issues, such as education, health care, drugs and immigration. Available each issue are synopses of current public opinion, key facts and trends, summaries, and a list of resources and contacts. This service began in late 1997, targeted to journalists and policymakers and subsequently will be offered to the public.

The Institute for Responsive Education

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CAPACITY BUILDING	RESOURCES & AUDIENCES	LINKAGES
The Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) Northeastern University 50 Nightingale Hall Boston, MA 02115 Phone: 617/373-2595 Fax: 617/373-8924 http://www.resp-ed.org Email: IRE_Publications@lynx.neu.edu Contact: Tony Wagner	IRE is a nonprofit organization that sponsors action research, conducts demonstration projects, and analyzes educational policy that explores new models of community partnership. Its mission is to promote greater family and community involvement in schools.	The community engagement programs bring school and community members together in a school-based approach. Through training and technical assistance, teams of school and community members learn to: conduct and analyze group discussions or focus groups, ask questions that elicit group concerns or viewpoints, and develop, carry out, and evaluate a plan for educational improvement. After a series of focus groups, school and community members conduct Town Meetings for Learning, which involve focus group participants as well as the larger community. The intent is to provide an opportunity for input and shared understanding. Discussions can also center around mission statements and proposed action plans.	The Institute works in predominantly low-income school districts to train teams of teachers, administrators, students, and community members. It provides technical assistance, field research, and reports, handbooks, videos, guides, and a tri-annual journal.	IRE includes the Responsive Schools project, consisting of clusters of K-12 schools in seven school districts. This project designs models that create family-focused schools. The League of Schools Reaching Out Project is an international network of 90 schools working to improve the success of students through family-community-school collaborations. Some related links online are: The Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University; the Family Education Network; and the Institute for Education Reform.

The Institute for Responsive Education Summary

The Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), founded in 1973 by former United States Deputy Commissioner of Education Don Davis, is a nonprofit organization. IRE's original focus was on developing links between schools and their communities through field tests of innovative collaborative relationships between families and school personnel.

Today, through the Responsive School Project initiated in 1994, IRE has developed new strategies for engaging in dialogues about school reform, not only with parents and school personnel, but also community members, social workers, and older students.

The project's uniqueness is that its approach is school-based. School teams learn how to conduct focus groups with all relevant shareholders. After a series of focus groups, a process called Town Meetings for Learning brings the various focus groups and the larger community together for shared understanding and discussion. Typical results include:

- all shareholders having input regarding educational goals;
- educators forming new community partnerships; and
- increased parent and community support and involvement.

Topics usually discussed in focus groups include:

- changes that have taken place in society and what students now need to know and be able to do to be prepared for work and citizenship;
- new learning standards and tests and what they mean for the community's schools; and
- immediate priorities for school improvement and how different groups can help

IRE Resources

The Institute is exploring ways of using the school community to bring about systemic change in American public education. IRE disseminates information nationally about "best practices" in school reform, and IRE senior staff work with district personnel to assess the impact of district-wide initiatives on local school change efforts. IRE offers opportunities for consultation and a range of technical assistance programs:

- Developing a Shared Vision
- Shared Leadership and Team Building
- Implementing and Assessing School Change
- Family Involvement and Community Engagement
- Creating Consensus on Core Values

IRE publications available are:

- *Family, Community, and School Collaboration in the United States in 1996: Good News/Bad News* - OCED Report
- *Building A Learning Community* - A complete set of four guides that includes: "Tools for Changing Schools," "Rethinking Teaching Curriculum, Assessment and School Structures," "Creating Family Driven School-Linked Services," and "Reaching Out to Families."
- *How Schools Change: Lessons from Three Communities* – A major study by Tony Wagner, president of IRE.

Also available are articles on systemic change, structured dialogues, seeking common ground and community consensus.

IRE is a former member of the Center on Families consortium funded by the Department of Education. Publications and reports are available through Johns Hopkins University at 410/516-8800.

Source: Institute for Responsive Education, 1998

The Jefferson Center

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CAPACITY BUILDING	RESOURCES & AUDIENCES	LINKAGES
The Jefferson Center for New Democratic Processes 3100 West Lake St., Suite 405 Minneapolis, MN 55416 Phone: 612/926-3292 Fax: 612/926-3199 Email: jcenter@usinternet.com http://www.usinternet.com/users/jcenter Contact: Doug Nethercut	The Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization conducting research and development into new methods of democratic processes. Its major work is the development and running of the Citizens Jury process at local, state and national levels. The goal is to demonstrate what the public would really think about an issue were they given the time and resources to thoroughly examine it.	The Citizens Jury Process allows a group of citizens that is well informed and representative of a community to have input on a complex issue resulting in a reasonable, thoughtful, and widely accepted solution. As part of a group of up to 24 jurors, the citizens attend hearings that last four or five days, during which they hear testimony from a variety of points of view. Meetings are conducted in a fair and neutral way, and jurors evaluate how well the staff has done in meeting that goal. The Jefferson Center has conducted or overseen over 23 Citizens Jury projects.	The Center conducts or oversees all the projects with the time needed to conduct the Citizens Jury process. The Center selects jurors from a city, state, or the nation via telephone sampling. Through the interview process, a group is selected on the basis of demographic variables such as age, race, gender, education level, geographic location, and attitude toward the public policy of the day. Online information describing some of the projects is available.	In 1994, the Institute for Public Policy Research of London became interested in the process, and as of March 1997, over 20 Citizens Juries had been conducted by British organizations. In addition to Minnesota, the Center has conducted projects in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and held nationwide juries in Washington, DC.

The Jefferson Center Summary

The Jefferson Center was founded in 1974 with the purpose of doing research and development on democracy. Initially it concentrated on a method for people to explore their own values in a group setting, a method of clarifying differences between experts on public questions, and the Citizens Jury process. The idea of a Citizens Jury, which has existed for over ten years, was created by Ned Crosby in 1971.* The Jefferson Center considered it to be the most effective new democratic process and therefore a trademark was taken out to ensure its proper use.

How the Citizens Jury Process Works

- Advisory Committee. An advisory committee to oversee the project is composed of individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic and who represent a range of perspectives.
- Telephone Survey. A telephone survey is conducted. Citizens are selected for the jury on the basis of age, race, gender, education, geographic locale, and political affiliation or attitude.
- Opening Day Meeting. Jurors are given a charge, which they fulfill over the course of the hearings. They hold a preliminary discussion of the issues involved and hear an overview of the topic from a neutral expert.
- Hearings. Several days of hearings are held, and expert witnesses are called to address the key topics and discuss the issues with the jurors. The jurors reach conclusions and make recommendations.
- Final Deliberations and Results. The jury issues its findings and recommendation to the press and public, along with its evaluation of the process and the manner in which it was conducted.

In contrast to the Citizens Jury Process, public opinion polls often yield results that are misinformed, while lobbyists, though perhaps well informed, are not representative of the general public. The Citizens Jury Process comes closer to yielding outcomes the public would want if they were well informed on a particular issue.

Juries have addressed state and national policies and election issues. Some have been congressionally sponsored, while others have been conducted at universities. The Jefferson Center worked with Orono Public Schools to identify and manage the current and future needs facing the district. The jury met April 13-17, 1998. In this case, the Center and the community worked together to identify the issues and needs facing the district, while an independent survey company selected the jury.

Citizens Jury Projects

Citizens Jury projects date from 1974 to the present. Some examples are:

- Yale Citizens Jury on At-Risk Children (1994)
- America's Tough Choices—Health Care Reform (1997)
- Dakota County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan—How Should We Grow? (1997)
- Issues in K-12 Education—Can We Afford the Future? (1997)

A full description of *Citizens Jury on Traffic Congestion Pricing*, which took place June 6-10, 1996, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, is available online. This document describes the complete process, from planning to findings and recommendations. Another example is the *Executive Summary on Citizens Jury on Minnesota's Electricity Future*, July 1997. The documentation includes information on the effect of the process based on a survey conducted before the jury convened and evaluations jurors submitted at the end of the process.

Source: The Jefferson Center, 1998

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* *In 1969, Peter Deinel, from the University Wuppertal in Germany, created a similar process known as a "Planning Cell."*

List of Resources

Alliance for National Renewal (ANR)

1444 Market Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80202-1728
Phone: 303/571-4343
Fax: 303/571-4404
http://www.ncl.org
Email: ncl@scn.net
Contact: Karen Buck, ANR Program Assistant

ANR is a national initiative of the National Civic League and involves more than 180 community building organizations working to address the serious issues facing American and its communities. The Partners of ANR represent tens of millions of members from organizations, institutions, and communities and individuals from the public, private and nonprofit sector who work together toward a shared vision of improving communities. Its mission is to serve as a catalyst for inspiring diverse people to work collaboratively in revitalizing their communities and society. The online network provides a broad selection of organizations that can be contacted to find out about community renewal activities and programs.

The Aspen Institute

133 New Hampshire Avenue N.W., Suite 1070
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202/736-5800
Fax : 202/467-0790
http://www.aspeninst.org
Email: dave.austin@aspeninst.org

The Aspen Institute is an international nonprofit educational institution dedicated to enhancing the quality of leadership through informed dialogue. It works with participants of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds from business, labor, government, the professions, the arts, and the nonprofit sector to relate timeless ideas and values to the foremost challenges facing society, organizations, and individuals. The institute has publications, seminar programs, and policy programs.

Civics Practices Network (CPN)

Center for Human Resources
Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare
Brandeis University
60 Turner Street
Waltham, MA 02154
Phone: 617/736-4890
Fax: 617/736-4891
http://www.cpn.org
Email: cpn@tiac.net

CPN is a pluralistic and nonpartisan network of civic educators and practitioners who share the commitment of telling the stories of civic innovation, share practical wisdom, and exchange the most effective tools available. Through the online network, successful case studies are pr vided of community problem solving, along with other programs, tools and services.

Danforth Foundation

231 South Bemiston Ave., Suite 680
St. Louis, MO 63105-1900
Phone: 314/588-1900
Fax: 314/588-0035

Established in 1927, the Danforth Foundation is a national philanthropic organization, dedicated to enhancing the humane dimension of life. Activities of the foundation traditionally have emphasized improving the quality of teaching and learning. Its challenges include improving children's readiness for school; assisting schools in working effectively with families, youth-serving agencies, and other community organizations; and developing leadership and policy-making skills among professional and lay persons working with schools.

The Harwood Group

4915 St. Elmo Avenue, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301/656-3669
Fax: 301/656-3669

Founded in 1988, the Harwood Group's purpose is to help organizations figure out public challenges and how to take effective action. The Harwood Group works with coalitions, public institutions, the media, foundations, and corporations seeking to take a fresh approach and seeking to understand and act on the challenges before them and society. For almost all clients, this organization works on an a flat-fee project basis.

Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)

1001 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202/822-8406
Fax: 202/872-4050
http://www.iel.org

IEL is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve educational opportunities and results for children and youth by developing and supporting leaders who work together. IEL works with leaders and emerging leaders of education, human and health service agencies at all governmental levels, nonprofits, corporations and private foundations. The institute also works in collaboration with Public Agenda to provide community services.

The Kettering Foundation

200 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2799
Phone: 937/434-7300
Fax : 513/439-9804
http://www.kettering.org

The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit operating foundation that conducts research in order to learn how citizens can make democracy work better and provides publications that focus on what it has learned through its research. The National Issues Forums (NIF) is under the auspices of the foundation. The online network provides a research file that contains over 2,500 abstracts, written over the past 15 years. Some of the subjects include public administration, community organizing, educational reform, leadership, and democratic and participatory theory.

Education Commission of the States (ECS)

707 17th Street, Suite 2700
Denver, CO 80202-3427
Phone: 303/299-3600
Fax: 303/296-8332
http://www.ecs.org
Email: ecs@ecs.org

ECS, a nonprofit, nationwide compact of states and territories, was formed to help governors, state legislators, state education officials, and others develop policies to improve the quality of education and meet the needs of all children. It does not serve as a special interest group, but brings together people with diverse perspectives and different roles from the local, district, state, and federal levels, to work with and learn from one another. ECS has developed a low-cost, in-depth listening method known as "Community Conversations about Educational Issues." Many publications are available on educational issues.

National Civic League (NCL)

1445 Market Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80202-1728
Phone: 303/571-4343
Fax: 303.571-4404
http://www.ncl.org
Email: ncl@ncl.org

The NCL advocates a new civic agenda to create communities that work for everyone and promotes the principles of collaborative problem solving and consensus-based decision-making. It provides technical assistance, publishes research and awards program. Some of its programs are the Alliance for National Renewal, Civic Assistance Program, and Healthy Communities program.

National Institute for Dispute Resolution

1726 M Street N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4502
Phone: 202/466-4764
Fax: 202/466-4769
http://www.nidr.org
Email: nidr@nidr.org

The National Institute for Dispute Resolution is a nonprofit corporation that receives funding from a growing number of supporters who understand the value of collaborative decision making and alternative means of resolving disputes. It provides technical assistance and coaching; educational programs and consulting; demonstration projects; and publications. Through the Associates Program's subscriptions, it provides practitioners with access to the Institute's collection of resources. The National Association for Mediation of Education (NAME) merged and became the Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet), a clearinghouse for information resources, technical assistance, training in the field of conflict resolution, and education. An online network offers a resource guide with a regional list of programs and practitioners in conflict resolution, and an online calendar provides a list of conferences and training events.

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Pew Partnership for Civic Change

145-C Ednam Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22903
Phone 804/971-2073
Fax: 804/971-7042
http://www.pew-partnership.org
Email: mail@pew-partnership.org

The Partnership for Civic Change is a special national initiative of the Pew Charitable Trust. It focuses on issues and opportunities facing small cities (population-50,000 to 150,000) including the exploration of ways to strengthen civic collaborations. A new initiative, the Pew Civic Entrepreneur Initiative, will be working with ten larger communities to have their civic leaders play a greater role in decision making in their communities and is intended to broaden and strengthen existing community leadership.

The Program for Community Problem Solving

915 15th Street N.W., Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202/783-2961
Fax: 202/346-2161
Contact: William Potapchuk
http://www.ncl.org

The Program for Community Problem Solving is a division of the National Civic League that assists communities to use collaborative approaches for long-range planning, service delivery, conflict resolution, program implementation, and problem solving. It also works with federal and state agencies, foundations, and others whose projects have direct bearing on community-level collaborative decision-making. The program's goal is to help communities empower themselves and develop a civic culture that nurtures and supports inclusive collaborative decision-making.

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Recommended Reading

Gross, S. (1996, April). Creating a learner's Bill of Rights: Vermont's town meeting approach. *Educational Leadership, 53 (7)*, 50-53.

Jefferson Center. (1998). *Citizens Jury on Orono Public Schools.* Minneapolis, MN: Author.

McPhee, Rob. (1995, December/1996, January). Orchestrating community involvement. *Educational Leadership, 53 (4)*, 71-74.

Ruenzel, D. (1997, Spring). Crucial conversations: Study circles help students talk constructively about race. *Teaching Tolerance, 6 (1)*, 19-23.

Tyack, David. (1997, February). Civic education: What roles for citizens? *Educational Leadership, 54 (5)*, 22-24.

Wagner, T. (1995, December/1996, January). Seeking common ground: Goal setting with all constituencies. *Educational Leadership, 54 (4)*, 40-44.

Wagner, T. (1997, February). The new village commons: Improving schools together. *Educational Leadership, 54 (5)*, 25-28

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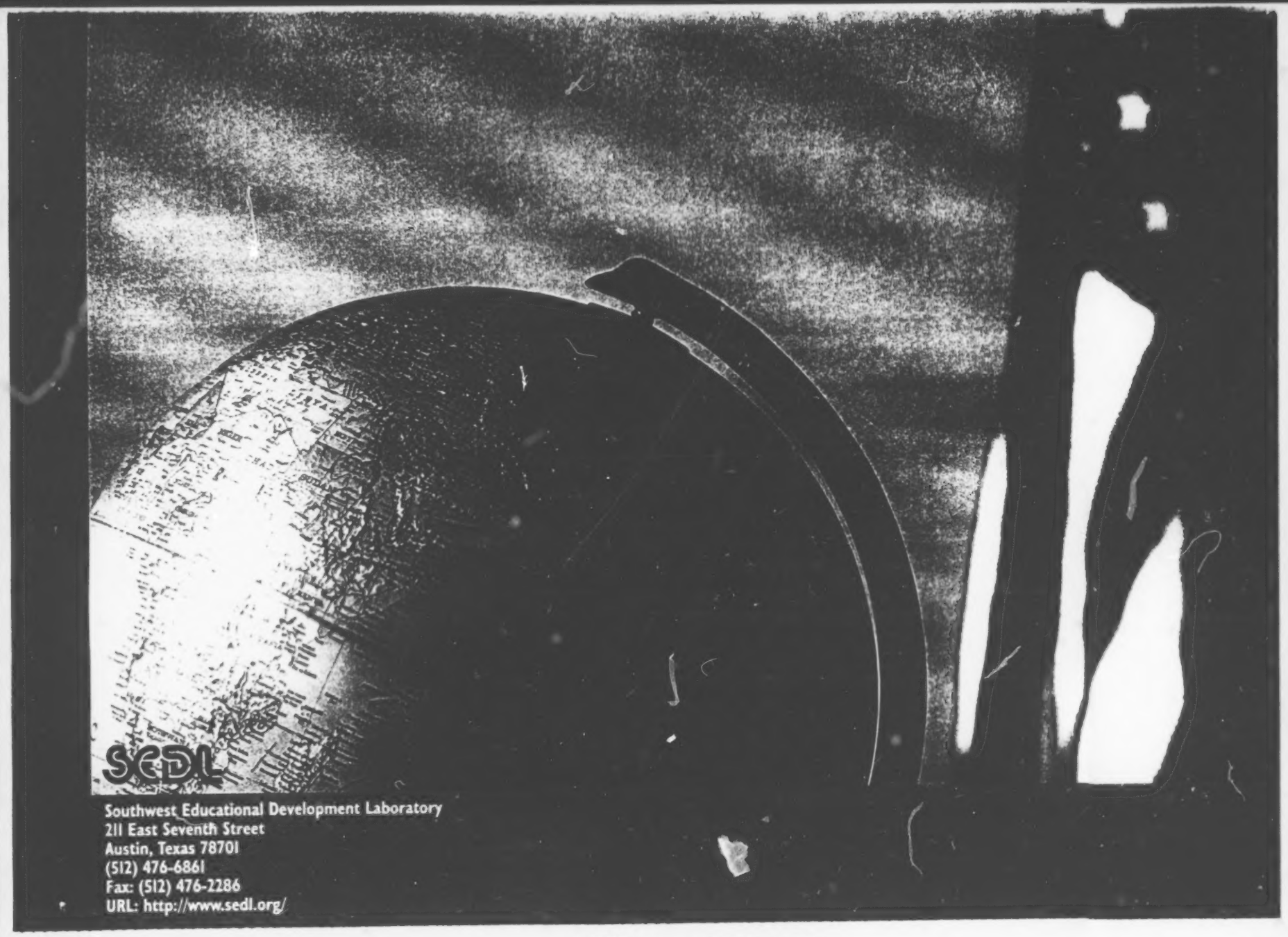

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 476-6861
Fax: (512) 476-2286
URL: http://www.sedl.org/

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